

REMARKS

Reconsideration of this patent application is respectfully requested in view of the foregoing amendments, and the following remarks.

The amendments to this patent application are as follows.

The Abstract of the Disclosure was objected to because of "(Fig. 1)". For this reason, the Abstract was revised to delete this and correction was made. Other minor editorial changes were made.

The Specification was objected to on page 4, line 14, because "bearing mat 4" should be --bearing mat 5--. For this reason, page 4, line 14 was so revised.

The Specification was objected to on page 5, line 28, because "IN" should be --In--. For this reason, page 5, line 28 has been so revised.

The Specification was objected to on page 7, line 16, because "column 8" should be --gap 8--, and on page 7, line 29, because "column 8" should be --gap 8--. For these reasons, page 7 in line 16 and in line 29, "column" has been so revised.

The amendments to the claims are as follows. Claims 8 and 9 have been cancelled and the subject matter thereof has been incorporated into claim 1.

Claims 2 to 7 and 10 to 18 have been amended to cancel "characterized in that" and to replace this with the word "wherein."

Claim 1 was objected to because of the following informalities: In claim 1, line 8, "circumfertial" should be --circumferential--. Thus, claim 1 was amended to be so revised to overcome this objection.

Claim 15 was objected to because in claim 15, line 6, "mounting section 11" should be --retaining section--; and because in claim 15, line 3, "spacer element 9" should be --distancing element 9--; and because in claim 15, line 3, "spacer section 10" should be --distancing section 10--. Thus, claim 15 has been amended to be so revised to overcome these objections.

For all these reasons, the Abstract, the Specification and all the claims, are now in complete compliance with all the formal requirements therefor. Withdrawal of these formal grounds of rejection are respectfully requested.

The Applicants comment upon the prior art rejections of the claims as follows.

With respect to the primary reference *Frietzsche* (U.S. Patent No. 3,854,888), the following differences are now to be discussed. First, there is the direct support by distancing elements.

According to FIG. 1 of the present invention, the monoliths 3, 4 are directly supported on the housing by means of the distancing elements 9.

In FIG. 8 of *Frietzsche* the monoliths 2 are encased each by a mantle 21 expanding in frustoconical shape to the inner diameter of the housing 1. The monoliths 2 are supported via the respective

mantle 21 against the housing 1. Support rings 5 are arranged radially between the housing 1 and the respective mantle 21. Accordingly, the monoliths 2 are not supported by the rings 5 directly, but indirectly via the respective mantle 21.

In the present invention the respective monolith 3, 4 (see FIG. 1) is directly supported by the distancing elements 9 against the housing 2.

Therefore, claim 1 has been amended to emphasize that the monoliths 3, 4 are supported directly by the distancing elements 9 against the housing 2. The structural features of original claim 8 have thusly been incorporated into claim 1 and claim 8 has been cancelled.

Bearing mat encasing the monoliths is another difference over the prior art.

According to pending claim 1, the monoliths are encased on a circumferential side by a common heat-resistant bearing mat in the housing.

In FIG. 8 of *Frietzsche*, there is no bearing mat encasing the monoliths 2. *Frietzsche* discloses in column 4, lines 21 to 30, that due to the mantle 21, a filling of annular space 10 (see FIG. 1) can be omitted. This filling can be mineral wool or the like (line 30, of column 4). A bearing mat encasing the respective monolith 2 is not disclosed in *Frietzsche*.

It should be clear, that the bearing mat fills the annular space between the respective monolith and the housing but really is

not only a filling of the annular space. A bearing mat is adapted to bear the respective monolith in the housing with predetermined radial stress or pressure in order to axially fix the monolith within the housing. For the axial fixation of the monoliths in the housing, *Frietzsche* is provided with additional rings 6, see FIG. 8 and column 3, lines 46 to 50.

Hence, claim 1 points out that the bearing mat encases the respective monolith laminar or two-dimensional on the circumferential side.

Common bearing mat is another difference.

According to pending claim 1, the two monoliths are encased...by a common heat-resistant bearing mat...

In FIG. 8 of *Frietzsche*, the two monoliths 2 are assigned to two mantles 21. Accordingly, each monolith 2 is encased by a separate mantle 21. Therefore, *Frietzsche* cannot provide a person skilled in the art any hint for a mantle encasing both monoliths 2 and, thus, *Frietzsche* also cannot provide any hint for a bearing mat encasing both monoliths.

With respect to the aforementioned feature that the distancing elements are supported on the housing, claim 1 has been amended in order to incorporate the features of claim 9. According to claim 9, the bearing mat has recesses provided for arranging the distancing elements. Thus, claim 9 has been cancelled.

Two distancing elements arranged distributedly is another difference.

According to pending claim 1, at least two heat-resistant distancing elements are arranged to be circumferentially distributed.

FIG. 8 of *Frietzsche* discloses a ring 6 operating as a distancing element. This ring 6 is a single part. There is no hint in *Frietzsche* that teaches a person skilled in the art to provide two or more distancing elements which are arranged to be circumferentially distributed.

The advantage of two or more circumferentially distributed distancing elements is to be seen in a reduced blocking effect with respect to the channels of the monoliths. Both, the distancing elements of the invention and the distancing ring of *Frietzsche*, project radially inwards from the circumferential side of the monoliths. Accordingly, each distancing element and the distancing ring, respectively, overlap radially an edge portion of the monoliths and, thus, locks or closes a number of channels of the monoliths. This results in an increased flow resistance for the exhaust gases. While the distancing ring known from *Frietzsche* blocks all channels along the circumferential edge, the circumferentially distributed distancing elements according to the invention block only a significantly reduced number of channels. Accordingly, the flow resistance of the multi-bed catalyzer can be reduced according to the present invention by using the at least two distancing elements arranged to be circumferentially distributed.

A substantial comment on the other prior art documents cited by the Patent Examiner, namely *DE 195 11 503, Takodoro U.S. Patent No. 4,278,639* and *Buck U.S. Patent No. 6,001,314* seems not to be necessary, since *Frietzsche* seems to be the closest prior art. Nevertheless, none of the other documents discloses two or more distancing elements arranged circumferentially distributed and directly supporting the monoliths on the housing. Accordingly, it is not seen how any combination of the cited prior art documents may lead to the combination of features as stated in amended claim 1 without an inventive step performed by the person skilled in the art.

For all of the above reasons, none of the prior art references provide an identical disclosure of the claimed invention. Hence, the present invention is not anticipated under 35 U.S.C. 102, but is patentable under 35 U.S.C. 103 over all the prior art applied by the Patent Examiner.

Withdrawal of these grounds of rejection is respectfully requested. A prompt notification of allowability is respectfully

requested.

Respectfully submitted,

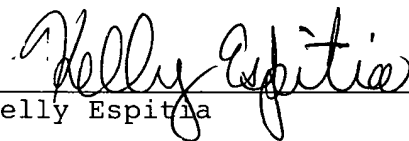
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Enclosure:

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited with the U.S. Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450, on December 21, 2006.


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